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## Millions without power in Texas as snow storm slams U.S.

By P.J.WEBER/J. BLEIBERG

Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — A frigid blast of winter weather across the U.S. plunged Texas into an unusually icy emergency Monday that knocked out power to more than 2 million people and shut down grocery stores and dangerously snowy roads.

The worsening conditions halted the delivery of COVID-19 vaccine shipments and left some Texas providers scrambling to find takers for doses expiring within hours.

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A snow-covered Ann Richards Congress Avenue Bridge leads to downtown after a heavy snowfall on Monday, Feb. 15, 2021, in Austin, Texas.

Associated Press



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## Millions without power in Texas as snow storm slams U.S.

Continued from Front

Temperatures nosedived into the single-digits as far south as San Antonio, and homes that had already been without electricity for hours had no certainty about when the lights and heat would come back on, as the state's overwhelmed power grid throttled into rotating blackouts that are typically only seen in 100-degree Fahrenheit (38-degree Celsius) summers. The storm was part of a massive system that brought snow, sleet and freezing rain to the southern Plains and was spreading across the Ohio Valley and to the Northeast. The Southwest Power Pool, a group of utilities across 14 states, called for rolling



A man peers out from under a blanket while trying to stay warm in below freezing temperatures Monday, Feb. 15, 2021, in Houston.

Associated Press

outages because the supply of reserve energy had been exhausted. Some utilities said they were starting blackouts, while others urged customers to reduce

power usage. "We're living through a really historic event going on right now," said Jason Furtado, a professor of meteorology at the University of Oklahoma,

pointing to all of Texas under a winter storm warning and the extent of the freezing temperatures. In Houston, where county leaders had warned that the freeze could create problems on the scale of massive hurricanes that slam the Gulf Coast, one electric provider said power may not be restored to some homes until Tuesday.

"This weather event, it's really unprecedented. We all living here know that," said Dan Woodfin, senior director of system operations at the Electric Reliability Council of Texas. He defended preparations made by grid operators and described the demand on the system as record-setting.

"This event was well beyond the design parameters for a typical, or even an extreme, Texas winter that you would normally plan for. And so that is really the result that we're seeing," Woodfin said.

The largest grocery store chain in Texas, H-E-B, closed locations around Austin and San Antonio, cities that are unaccustomed to snow and have little resources to clear roads. The slow thaw and more frigid lows ahead was also taking a toll on Texas' distribution of COVID-19 vaccines.

State health officials said Texas, which was due to receive more than 400,000 additional vaccine doses this week, now does not expect deliveries to occur until at least Wednesday. But with doses already in-hand expiring, Rice University on Monday abruptly began offering vaccines on its closed Houston campus. Harris Health System told the school it had about 1,000 vaccines that "were going to go to waste" and asked if the school could find takers, said Doug Mill-

er, a university spokesman.

"The window was just a couple hours. They have to take care of it quickly," Miller said.

Caught without enough groceries on hand, Lauren Schneider, a 24-year-old lab technician, walked to a Dallas grocery store near her home Monday morning dressed in a coat, hat and face mask. Schneider said she didn't feel comfortable driving with the roads covered in snow and ice. She said she hadn't seen a serious snowfall in Dallas since her childhood. "I really didn't think it's would be this serious," said Schneider. Teresa and Luke Fassetta, trundling through the snow carrying grocery bags, said the store lost power while they were shopping. The couple said they lost power overnight, then got it back around 9 a.m., and they were hoping it would still be on when they arrived home. If not, Teresa said, "we just have a bunch of blankets and candles and two cats to keep us warm."

Several cities in the U.S. saw record lows as Arctic air remained over the central part of the country. In Minnesota, the Hibbing/Chisholm weather station registered minus 38 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 39 degrees Celsius), while Sioux Falls, South Dakota, dropped to minus 26 Fahrenheit (minus 26 degrees Celsius).

Most government offices and schools were closed for Presidents Day, and authorities pleaded with residents to stay home. Louisiana State Police reported that it had investigated nearly 75 weather-related crashes caused by a mixture of snow, sleet and freezing rain in the past 24 hours. □

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## As redistricting looms, Democrats jockey to counter GOP edge

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI

Associated Press

In the name of fairness, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo and his Democratic allies once welcomed the creation of a nonpartisan redistricting commission that would redraw congressional maps free of political influence and avoid contorted gerrymandering.

But now that the commission is stepping up its work, New York Democrats seem to be having second thoughts. The state may lose House seats and, under the old rules, Democrats would have had the power to redraw lines in their favor.

Some Democrats want to make it easier to overrule the commission.

As the once-a-decade redistricting conflicts heat up across the country, both Republicans and Democrats are wrestling with how far to press their advantage in a fight as consequential as any election. For Republicans that means building on the success of 10 years ago — even as some population and political trends work against them. For Democrats, it's a test of their commitment to the changes they've long argued are needed to create a level playing field.

"If I'm a Democratic leader and I've recently come into power, I'm not sure why I'd want to constrain myself when the other party is playing hardball," said Jonathan Cervas, a redistricting expert at Carnegie Mellon University.

The GOP has complete control of the redistricting process in 18 states — including the growing states of Texas and Florida — giving it the power to redraw boundaries for 181 U.S. House seats, according to a report from the Brennan Center for Justice, which advocates for a redistricting overhaul. Democrats have full control over only 49 House seats. That would jump to 74 if they overrule New York's nonpartisan commission, said the Brennan Center's Michael Li.

Whoever controls the map-drawing wields enormous



In this Jan. 11, 2021 file photo, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo delivers his State of the State address virtually from The War Room at the state Capitol, in Albany, N.Y.

Associated Press

and long-lasting power over the U.S. political system. Skilled mapmakers can draw boundaries that pack a party's voters into districts, creating safe legislative seats. The proliferation of uncompetitive seats has added to the nation's growing partisan polarization, because so few lawmakers must worry about appealing to voters from the other party.

The stakes are particularly clear now. Some experts note Republicans could win control of the House in 2022 based on redistricting alone. Three of the states where the GOP has complete control of the map-making — Texas, Florida and North Carolina — are expected to gain a total of six seats. A GOP sweep of those seats would flip the House. But packing Republican voters into new districts in the growing states won't be easy. Much of the population growth in those states has come in cities, inner-ring suburbs and places with large Black and Latino communities — all key Democratic constituencies.

"The Republicans are in the driver's seat, but are limited in what they can do," Cervas said.

All this will play out in a hyper-compressed timeline. Due to the coronavirus pan-

demic, the Census Bureau has said it won't release detailed population data needed to draw maps until late September — a delay of several months. As a result, legislatures will probably be called into special sessions to draw maps toward the end of the year, and the window for legal challenges will be exceedingly narrow.

"To the extent that maps look horrible and you're a litigator and you want to challenge the maps before the election, you have less time," said Justin Levitt, a law professor at Loyola Marymount University.

Republicans are keenly aware of the courts' power. GOP operatives note their party would probably control the House today if courts hadn't struck down their redistricting in four states since 2011 and ordered more Democratic-friendly districts.

Still, some who advocate an overhaul of the system are optimistic that this round will produce more balanced maps and competitive seats than last time. They note state governments that had unified Republican control, such as Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, now are split between the parties.

Meanwhile, five states — Colorado, Michigan, New

York, Utah and Virginia — have added nonpartisan commissions, while voters in Ohio placed new restrictions on partisan redistricting.

But most states in the GOP-dominated South lack nonpartisan commissions. They're also likely to gain many seats.

"In these fast-growing states like Texas, Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina, Republicans have a clear path to go to town," said Li of the Brennan Center.

Democrats say they're ready.

The party has invested more in the redistricting process this time, with an organization headed by former Attorney General Eric Holder that advocates for nonpartisan commissions to draw districts and is ready for legal action against tilted maps.

"We are currently holding the majority in the House based off the maps the Republicans drew 10 years ago," said Tim Persico, executive director of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee.

"We recognize we're going to have to fight some fights on Republicans' playing field because that's Republicans' prerogative."

Democrats also are pushing a sweeping election

overhaul bill that would put redistricting under the authority of nonpartisan commissions in each state. The bill is not expected to make it past GOP opposition in the Senate.

Republicans counter that Democrats are opportunists, too. "Both parties draw maps in their favor," said Adam Kincaid, executive director of the National Republican Redistricting Trust. While Democratic-leaning states have voluntarily ceded their redistricting power to commissions, some Democrats have expressed frustration. In Virginia, several Black lawmakers unsuccessfully objected to the push for a commission, arguing that it would only dilute Black voices and hand final control to conservative state courts.

In New York, where Democrats took control of the state legislature in 2018, some Democrats are still looking for ways to claw back some of their power. One of the first acts of the Democratic legislature this year was to place on this November's ballot a measure that would make it easier to override the nonpartisan maps, requiring only simple majority vote. Advocates of the nonpartisan commission have been alarmed for months as the Cuomo administration failed to release the \$1 million the commission was owed. Instead the administration continued to provide \$2 million annually to the old legislative commission that produced the partisan maps.

The nonpartisan commissioners complained to Cuomo that their staff was working for free and could not do their job. The Cuomo administration now says it will get the money to the commission. □

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## South Carolina considers breaking up public health agency

By MICHELLE LIU  
Associated Press/Report for America

**COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP)** — South Carolina's public health workers have been tasked with keeping the state safe for 143 years, ever since lawmakers created a health board in 1878 after a yellow fever outbreak killed 20,000 Americans.

Now, as the coronavirus pandemic surges, legislators are trying to break their agency apart.

As in most states, South Carolina's public health agency was underfunded and overworked long before it had to sustain an exhausting defense against a virus humans had never seen before.

Criticism has mounted from all sides since then — over a slow rollout of testing, the agency's refusal to release detailed data on early cases, and for seeming to sideline its top epidemiologist. Now a new director has stepped into what many see as a leadership vacuum, but lawmakers intent on dismantling the Department of Health and Environmental Control aren't cutting him much slack.

Dr. Edward Simmer is the first medical doctor to helm the agency in nearly four decades — a fact that surprises Simmer himself. He told The Associated Press in an interview that he'll put science at the center of his



In this Wednesday, Jan. 13, 2021 file photo, Senate President Harvey Peeler prepares to introduce South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster for the State of the State address in Columbia, S.C.

Associated Press

dealings with the public, the legislature and the governor. "Obviously, there are political aspects to what DHEC does. My focus is to be as apolitical as we can be," Simmer said.

Unlike most public health agencies, South Carolina's portfolio has included environmental regulation since the 1970s. It now has nearly 4,000 employees, overseeing everything from water quality, dams and landfills to hospitals and vaccine distribution.

The sprawling agency only indirectly answers to elected officials, through an eight-member board ap-

pointed by the governor. State officials have said for years that it has become too powerful and unmanageable.

Lawmakers have accused the agency of failing to advocate forcefully enough for prevention measures or to push back on Republican Gov. Henry McMaster's decisions to reopen businesses. They said DHEC staff shirked responsibility by letting the board decide how to allocate limited vaccines; that the board, comprised mostly of businesspeople and just one doctor, lacks transparency; and that board members

moved too slowly to find a new director after the last one quit, mid-pandemic.

Senate President Harvey Peeler is ready to split DHEC apart, bundling public health duties with the state's mental health department and funneling environmental permitting operations to other state agencies. McMaster has said he supports breaking up DHEC as well.

"No one is in control at DHEC and hasn't been for quite some time," Peeler declared in December when he announced the bill that would restructure the agency.

Public health agencies have become political scapegoats nationwide after years of inadequate funding, and a lack of federal leadership and coordination has made responding to the pandemic even more difficult, said Simon Haeder, a professor of public policy at Penn State.

In some other states with Republican-controlled legislatures such as Michigan, Montana, Ohio and Oklahoma, lawmakers are looking to curb the powers of proactive state and local health departments.

In South Carolina, the prevailing sentiment is a desire to make the agency more effective, after the response has been hamstrung by a series of politically-appointed directors who didn't last and other staff turnovers.

"You can make all the structural changes you want, but you've got to pick people who are really good at this," said former Gov. Jim Hodges, who served from 1999 to 2003.

Sen. Dick Harpoortian, a Columbia Democrat who has railed against the agency's refusal to shut down businesses flouting public health guidelines, said the plan to split DHEC is a "distraction" and it's the board that ought to be replaced: "They've been useless. Useless is an understatement." □

## LAPD investigating report of George Floyd 'Valentine'



In this June 5, 2020, file photo, Los Angeles police chief Michel Moore, left, speaks as someone holds up a portrait of George Floyd during a vigil with members of professional associations and the interfaith community at Los Angeles Police Department headquarters in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — The Los Angeles Police Department has launched an internal investigation after an officer reported that a photo of George Floyd with the words "You take my breath away" in a Valentine-like format was circulated among officers.

Police Chief Michel Moore said Saturday that investigators will try to determine how the image may have come into the workplace and who may have been involved, the Los Angeles Times reported. Moore said the officer who made the complaint will be interviewed Monday.

"Our investigation is to determine the accuracy of the allegations while also reinforcing our zero tolerance for anything with racist views," Moore said.

Floyd, a Black man, died last May after a Minneapolis police officer pressed a knee on his neck as Floyd repeatedly said, "I can't breathe." His death launched massive protests nationwide over racial injustice and police brutality. Ben Crump, an attorney for Floyd's family, said Monday that the family is outraged. "This is beyond insult on top of injury—it's injury on top of death. The type of callous-

ness and cruelty within a person's soul needed to do something like this evades comprehension — and is indicative of a much larger problem within the culture of the LAPD," Crump said. "We demand that everyone who was involved is held accountable for their revolting behavior and that an apology be issued to the family immediately." The Times reported that Moore also confirmed the department is investigating two anonymous Instagram accounts reportedly linked to department personnel — including one called the "Blue Line Mafia." □

## Philippines demands more U.S. security aid to retain pact

By JIM GOMEZ

Associated Press

**MANILA, Philippines (AP) —**

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte's administration wants considerably more military aid from the United States in exchange for not abrogating a key security pact with Washington, his spokesman said Monday, rejecting criticism that the blunt demand resembled extortion.

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque said the Philippines has received much less security assistance from the U.S. than Pakistan and other countries despite Manila's long treaty alliance with Washington. Roque did not specify how much more the U.S. should provide in exchange for the continuation of the Visiting Forces Agreement.

Duterte said in a speech last week that if the U.S. wants to keep the military agreement, which he ordered abrogated a year ago, "they have to pay." "It's a shared responsibility, but your share of responsibility does not come free," said Duterte, who is known for his blunt comments.



In this Sept. 28, 2020, file photo provided by the Malacanang Presidential Photographers Division, Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte talks with members of the Inter-Agency Task Force on the Emerging Infectious Diseases at the Malacanang presidential palace in Manila, Philippines.

Associated Press

Roque said that "what the president wants is, if you want to continue using our territory, we want just compensation for it. Not loose coins, not dilapidated equipment."

Duterte's administration notified the U.S. government in February last year that it intends to abrogate

the 1998 agreement, which allows the entry of large numbers of American forces for joint combat training with Filipino troops and lays down the legal terms for their temporary stay. The termination would have taken effect after 180 days, in August, but Duterte delayed the effectiveness of the

decision.

If the agreement is terminated, it would deal a major blow to one of America's oldest alliances in Asia. Duterte has often lashed out at U.S. security policies while nurturing relations with China and Russia. But his foreign and defense secretaries have cited the

importance of Manila's alliance with America.

The U.S. military presence in the region has been seen as a crucial counterbalance to China, which continues to aggressively assert its vast territorial claims in the disputed South China Sea despite a 2016 international arbitration ruling that invalidated their historic basis. China, the Philippines, Vietnam and three other governments have been locked in the territorial standoff for decades.

Sen. Panfilo M. Lacson, who heads the Senate committee on national defense and generally supports Duterte, said "there is a more civil and statesman-like manner to ask for compensation from a longtime ally using the usual diplomatic channels and still get the same desired results."

Duterte's demand for the U.S. to pay up "may have given the impression that the Philippines is a nation of extortionists," Lacson said in a statement which stressed that "one cannot put a price tag on the value" of the Visiting Forces Agreement. □

## Russia says it's open to better ties with E.U. despite chill

By VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV

Associated Press

**MOSCOW (AP) —** Russia's top diplomat blamed the European Union Monday for a freeze in ties but argued that Moscow remains ready to mend rela-

tions if it hears positive signals from the bloc.

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said after talks in St. Petersburg with his Finnish counterpart, Pekka Haavisto, that "if the EU decides that it's necessary

to restore relations, we will be ready for it."

Lavrov's statement followed his warning last week that Moscow was ready for a split with the 27-nation bloc if Brussels moves to introduce new crippling sanctions that would hurt the Russian economy.

Russian-EU ties, which sank to post-Cold War lows after Moscow's 2014 annexation of Ukraine's Crimea and support for separatist insurgents in eastern Ukraine, took a new blow recently over the arrest of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny. The most prominent political foe of President Vladimir Putin was arrested Jan. 17 upon his return from Germany, where he spent five months recuperating from nerve agent poisoning he blamed on the Kremlin.

Russian authorities have denied the allegations.

Russia has rejected U.S. and EU criticism of Navalny's arrest and imprisonment, and a sweeping crackdown on protests urging his release, as meddling in its internal affairs. Just as EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell was visiting Russia earlier this month, Moscow announced the expulsion of diplomats from Germany, Poland and Sweden for attending protests in support of Navalny. The three EU nations expelled a Russian diplomat each in a quid pro quo response.

Haavisto emphasized the EU's strong criticism of the Russian action, noting that the EU diplomats were fulfilling their duty while observing the protests. He reaffirmed the EU's demand for Navalny's release and

the bloc's criticism of the crackdown on demonstrations.

Lavrov said that economic relations with the EU have been hurt by sanctions and political contacts have been limited to sporadic exchanges of views on international crises.

"Little has been left of our relations, and our conversations focus on Syria, the Iranian nuclear program and some other international issues," he said. "We remain ready to discuss any issues of mutual interest without trying to impose ourselves."

He added that while Russian-EU relations have stalled, Moscow has maintained strong bilateral contacts with individual EU members and will develop them further despite the damage inflicted by the sanctions. □



In this handout photo released by Russian Foreign Ministry Press Service, Finnish Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto, left, and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov enter a hall to attend their joint news conference following their talks in St. Petersburg, Russia, Monday, Feb. 15, 2021.

Associated Press

# Okonjo-Iweala becomes first woman, African to lead WTO

By DAVID McHUGH

AP Business Writer

**FRANKFURT, Germany (AP)**

— Nigeria's Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala was appointed Monday to head the World Trade Organization, becoming the first woman and first African to take on the role amid rising protectionism and disagreement over how the body decides cases involving billions in sales and thousands of jobs. Okonjo-Iweala, 66, was named director-general by representatives of the 164 countries that make up the WTO, which deals with the rules of trade between nations. She said during an online news conference that she was taking over at a time when the WTO "is facing so many challenges" and is in need of "deep and wide-ranging reforms."

She said the first priority would be quickly addressing the economic and health consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuring that poor countries do not have "to wait in line" for vaccines.

"Vaccine nationalism does not pay" she said, because countries that lag in vaccination will be the source of new variants.

Other priorities would include reforming the organization's dispute resolution process and finding ways for trade rules to deal with change such as digitalization and e-commerce. Dispute resolution is key because the WTO is the only



In this Friday, Jan. 24, 2014 file photo, Nigerian Finance Minister Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala during a panel discussion "The Post-2015 Goals: Inspiring a New Generation to Act", the fifth annual Associated Press debate, at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

Associated Press

place countries can come to have their trade differences settled, she said.

"It will not be easy because we have the issue of lack of trust among members which has built up over time," she said. "One good thing is, every member agrees that dispute resolution needs to be reformed," she added, though they have different opinions about what those reforms should be.

The appointment, which takes effect March 1, came after U.S. President Joe Biden endorsed her candidacy, which had been blocked by former

President Donald Trump. Biden's move was a step toward his aim of supporting more cooperative approaches to international problems after Trump's "America first" approach that launched multiple trade disputes.

But unblocking the appointment is only the start in dealing with trade disputes launched by Trump, and in resolving U.S. concerns about the WTO that date to the Obama administration. The U.S. had blocked the appointment of new judges to the WTO's appellate body, essentially freezing its ability to resolve ex-

tended and complex trade disputes.

The U.S. government has argued that the trade organization is slow-moving and bureaucratic, ill-equipped to handle the problems posed by China's state-dominated economy and unduly restrictive on U.S. attempts to impose sanctions on countries that unfairly subsidize their companies or export at unusually low prices.

Okonjo-Iweala has been Nigeria's finance minister and, briefly, foreign minister, and has had a 25-year career at the World Bank as an advocate for economic

growth and development in poorer countries. She rose to the No. 2 position of managing director, where she oversaw \$81 billion in development financing in Africa, South Asia, Europe and Central Asia. She made an unsuccessful bid for the top post in 2012 with the backing of African and other developing countries, challenging the traditional practice that the World Bank is always headed by an American.

Okonjo-Iweala has a bachelor's degree in economics from Harvard University and a Ph.D. in regional economics and development from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

South Korean trade minister Yoo Myung-hee had withdrawn her candidacy, leaving Okonjo-Iweala as the only choice. Her predecessor, Roberto Azevedo, stepped down Aug. 31, a year before his term expired.

Trump repeatedly accused the WTO of unfair treatment of the U.S., started a trade war with China in defiance of the WTO system, and threatened to pull the United States out of the trade body altogether. Trump also imposed 25% steel tariffs that hit European allies on national security grounds, a justification that went beyond trade measures normally used within the WTO rules framework to address complaints about unfair trade. □

## Canada and allies declare arbitrary detentions immoral

**OTTAWA, Ontario (AP)** — Canada, the U.S. and a coalition of 56 other countries on Monday endorsed a declaration denouncing state-sponsored arbitrary detention of foreign nationals for political purposes.

The new declaration was the result of a campaign to free Canadians Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor from Chinese prison. The two were arrested in apparent retaliation for the arrest days earlier of a top

Chinese tech executive Meng Wanzhou, a Huawei official and the daughter of the company's founder. Canadian police detained Meng in Vancouver on a U.S. extradition request in December 2018. She faces fraud charges in the U.S. and her extradition case is before the Canadian courts.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the U.S. "wholeheartedly" endorsed the declaration and called "on all like-

minded countries to work together to pressure the nations that engage in such detentions to put an end to this practice, to release those detained under such conditions and to respect the rule of law and human rights."

While ending Kovrig's and Spavor's Chinese imprisonment remains Canada's top priority, the new declaration was meant to be a broad denunciation of coercive practice in other countries, such as Russia,

Iran and North Korea.

Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Marc Garneau said the new declaration is "country-agnostic" and that he wants to recruit more countries as signatories with the goal of ending the practice everywhere and to discourage other countries from taking it up. Kenneth Roth, the head of Human Rights Watch, said, "The Chinese government's detentions of the Canadians Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor

epitomizes this despicable practice," though he said China has subjected Australian citizens to similar tactics. "It is totally unacceptable if citizens from our country go to another country either to visit or to work there, that they have to live in fear that they could become a bargaining chip," Garneau said.

Other signatories included nations such as the U.K., France, Australia, Germany, Malawi, Sweden and Panama. □

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## Guinea declares Ebola epidemic, neighboring countries act

By CARLEY PETESCH

Associated Press

DAKAR, Senegal (AP) — Guinea has officially declared it has an Ebola epidemic after at least three people have died and four others have been infected in the West African nation. Neighboring Sierra Leone and Liberia have put their citizens on high alert as the three West African nations battled the world's deadliest Ebola outbreak from 2014 to 2016, which began in Guinea and in which more than 11,300 people died.

Sierra Leone's President Julius Maada Bio has flown to consult with Guinean President Alpha Conde.

Guinea's new Ebola outbreak occurred in



In this Nov. 20, 2014 file photo, an MSF Ebola health worker is sprayed as he leaves the contaminated zone at the Ebola treatment centre in Gueckedou, Guinea.

Associated Press

N'Zerekore, in southern Guinea, where health officials detected suspicious cases of Ebola with patients presenting symptoms of diarrhea, vomiting and

bleeding. The sick had participated in the burial of a nurse on Feb. 1 in Gouake, according to Guinea's Minister of Health Remy Lamah, who added that the

first investigation counted seven cases, all of people over the age of 25 years, including the two women and one male who have died.

"The government reassures the population that all measures are being taken to stem this epidemic as quickly as possible. It invites the populations of the affected areas to respect hygiene and prevention measures and to report to health authorities in the presence of suggestive signs," Lamah said in the ministry statement.

The epidemic was declared after a crisis meeting Sunday. All suspected cases have been isolated in N'Zerekore and Conakry, the capital. Investigations

have begun, a treatment center has opened and supplies have been sent to the region.

Traditional funerals in which people wash and touch the body of the deceased facilitate the spread of Ebola. It usually jumps to humans from infected animals, such as bats, and then spreads between humans via direct contact with bodily fluids.

Liberia's president George Weah has mandated health authorities "to heighten the country's surveillance and preventative activities" and also ordered health officials to "immediately engage communities in towns and villages bordering Guinea and increase anti-Ebola measures." □

## Germany ekes some fun out of a quiet Carnival

DUESSELDORF, Germany (AP) — A few Carnival floats poking fun at the likes of Russian President Vladimir Putin, former U.S. President Donald Trump, German politicians and the fight against coronavirus made their way Mon-

day through the largely empty streets of Duesseldorf, which would usually be the site of raucous celebrations.

Parades, street festivals and other large gatherings have all been cancelled this year.



A political carnival float depicting the coronavirus vs the carnival virus is rolled out to be shown in the streets when the traditional carnival parade was canceled due to the coronavirus pandemic in Duesseldorf, Germany, Monday, Feb. 15, 2021.

Associated Press

But organizers in Duesseldorf, one of the German Rhineland's main Carnival strongholds, didn't want to let Rose Monday in 2021 go completely without the traditional caricatures of current events.

They sent eight floats through the city — separately, rather than in a parade, and on routes that were kept secret in advance to prevent crowds from gathering.

"It's a small signal that we're alive," float builder Jacques Tilly told the German news agency dpa.

This year's offerings included a depiction of Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny kicking a much larger Putin, both dressed in judo outfits, and a caricature of Trump on a spit over a fire marked with the words "Make America Great Again!" □

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Travellers' Choice 2020

## Aqua Grill restaurant: The taste of New England with Caribbean flair

ORANJESTAD — One thing is for certain: Chef Scott Scheuerman and his team are famous for getting people hooked, just like the fish on your plate. You will get the taste of home fused with Caribbean while dining in elegance. Scheuerman will tell how Aqua Grill established its name since opening in 2002, and why it reaped accolades from such prestigious travel publications as Fodor's, who says, "This hip restaurant is heaven on earth for seafood lovers, who will find fresh fish galore..."

### 'A Scheuer thing'

American-born Scheuerman, executive chef of Aqua Grill, is thrilled about 'his restaurant'. "We started out as a New England style seafood restaurant, patterned after Boston style. But we quickly blended into some Caribbean, local flair... if you will. We do still offer the traditional New England dishes like whole Maine lobster, northern seafood plates like the salmon, tuna and swordfish. We buy also from the local fisherman to offer Caribbean dishes like snapper and grouper which are number one sellers in our restaurant being the most prevalent local fishes. Catches like wahoo, mahi mahi and brasil are welcome too, anything that comes out of the water we embrace."

### Fresh import from Boston

Aqua Grill flies in their own shipments on a weekly basis mostly from Boston because the price quality balance is the best, says the chef. "We are unique in this. Number one priority is buying fresh, we mean not frozen. Our original concept is New England seafood and we stick to that concept. They have a wonderful assortment of oysters and lobsters as well." Aqua Grill also offers international fusion type of menu items; actually all you wish for is there. A very balanced menu awaits you. "And we have options for meat lovers and vegetarians/vegans too. We, however, do not mix it up too much be-



cause we believe we do not want to lose our identity as a seafood restaurant," Scheuerman adds.

### Rave reviews

Secretly, we all know that the success of a restaurant begins in the kitchen. That is where the chef creates his magic and for Aqua Grill the culinary team has won an assortment of awards for their contin-

uous delivery of 'haute-cuisine del mar.' Classic seafood is mingled with contemporary ideas resulting in surprising dishes that soon made the restaurant a must-dine, confirmed by established travel media specialists like Fodor's and Frommer's.

The glow of Aqua Grill is obvious by entering the restaurant. The eclec-



tic of a modern and a traditional New England fish house style appeal and the open-view kitchen adds to the thrill.

Let's see what is on the menu. Alaska King Crab Legs, Seared Chilean Sea Bass \_a super seller, Steamed Live Maine Lobster or Broiled and Stuffed, Snapper and Grouper are part of the delicious seafood selections. All Covid-19 protocol is in place and you may choose to dine indoors or outdoors on the classy patio. Welcome to the theatre of the sea, let us entertain you.

### A bit more about Scott

He knows what they like, the tourists from New England (and the rest of U.S. visitors) because he is one of them, yet he has been living for 18 years in the Caribbean making him an expert of both worlds. A native of Delaware, graduate of Johnson & Wales culinary college in Rhode Island, Chef Scott had amassed over thirty years of regional cooking experience in hotels and restaurants as he chartered his course through New England, New Mexico, Florida and the Caribbean before making Aruba his home. Along with formal studies, his diversity as a chef is also due to his interest and university degree in Art and Cultural Anthropology, as well as his wife's native cooking. She is from Colombia.

It's clear as water; for sublime seafood in Aruba go to the island's premier seafood restaurant: Aqua Grill. This seafood-heaven place is already a statement for years with a consistency in upscale dining and top-shelf service. If you like to savor your seafood, this is your dive in. We promise you will get hooked.□

### Aqua Grill

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## Aruban Elizabeth is the winner of The Great Dutch Bake Off

**HILVERSUM, NETHERLANDS** — "I started shouting, because it is a relief when you suddenly hear your name. A very strange feeling, it seems like you are taking a very deep dive in the water and you have to hold your breath for a long time. And then the moment when you are upstairs again and take the first breath of air," says Aruban Elizabeth who is the winner of the Dutch television show "The Great Dutch Bake Off".

Elizabeth still cannot quite believe that she has been voted the Best Home Baker in the Netherlands. When André, the TV host, announced the winner, she doesn't even realize it's about her. "André said the winner was right in front of him and nobody responded. I was in the middle, but really had no idea. It wasn't until he said "mi dushi" to me that I understood."

The cheerful and always positive Elizabeth has shown the best with her colorful and exuberant creations. The moment she enters the competition for the first time is already profit for her. "I didn't feel at all that it was a competition with the other bakers. I stayed close to myself all those weeks and especially tried to bake with love and passion."

Elizabeth has prepared for battle as a top athlete. She now dares to admit that she has practiced the turban from the first episode at home no less than twelve times. "My neighbors have

never eaten so much pastry before, but I wanted to make up for that turban. It was the first assignment and I really wanted to be there."

Elizabeth is a real kitchen princess. She likes to bake for her family, but also for colleagues in the hospital where she works as a nurse. "I have never been addicted to certain substances, but baking can still be called an addiction. It always gives me such a euphoric feeling! It's like wrapping a present for someone. I especially like making a cake beautiful. People eat with their eyes, my mother always said that."

### Aruba is in my heart

Elizabeth shows the memories of her childhood in the "Who am I Cake". Playing under the watapana tree, on Sunday to the beach, the blue sky and the beautiful sunset. "This cake really represents who I am, cheerful, colorful and sweet. Aruba is still in my heart." Elizabeth's participation has also been noted in Aruba, as she receives many responses from her family and friends who live there. "The program can also be seen there on local cable

television. And the Dutch newspaper Amigoe even wrote a piece about me."

Elizabeth was not alone in winning the contest, because she and her family have formed a close-knit team in recent months. Elizabeth is married and has four children. "My two oldest children are adults and they immediately created a group app to divide the tasks around the house. Who picks up the youngest children from school, who helps with cooking and the household. I am so grateful to them, because I couldn't have done it without their efforts."

### Head full of dreams

As a winner, Elizabeth is allowed to make her own book, a dream that has been high on her wish list for years. "I have always said that I would one day want to write a biography for other women, with the message not to give up. Because I didn't do that myself. I never expected it to be a baking book." She was born in the Dominican Republic. At a young age she immigrated with her mother to Aruba. Because she likes to help people,



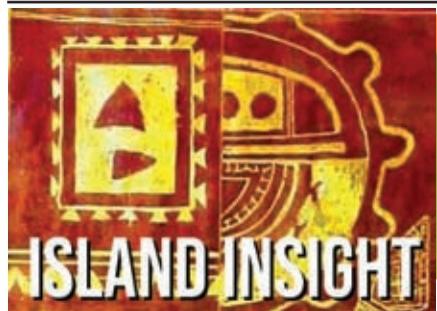
she opts for the nursing course. At the age of 25, she decides to continue the training in the Netherlands and board the plane all by herself. "I had a briefcase with me, 238 euros and a head full of dreams." Life in the Netherlands is difficult for her in the beginning, because she misses the warmth of the island and of course her mother and her sisters. "Sometimes I was crying in class because I was homesick and would prefer to go back the next day." But Elizabeth persists and she is proud of what she has achieved. "In the Netherlands I really matured, because I had no one here and had to man-

age it all myself."

### Bolo di Chateau

She hopes to be able to make people happy with cake and bread for a very long time and will be working on her baking book in the coming months. There is a special cake that should not be missing: the bolo di chateau. An Aruban cake with layers of sponge cake and chocolate cream. A cake that brings her back to the warm childhood she had on the island. "I used to always get a chateau cake on my birthday and this cake started my passion for baking." Source: heelhollandbakt.omroepmax.nl. □





Article by Etnia Nativa

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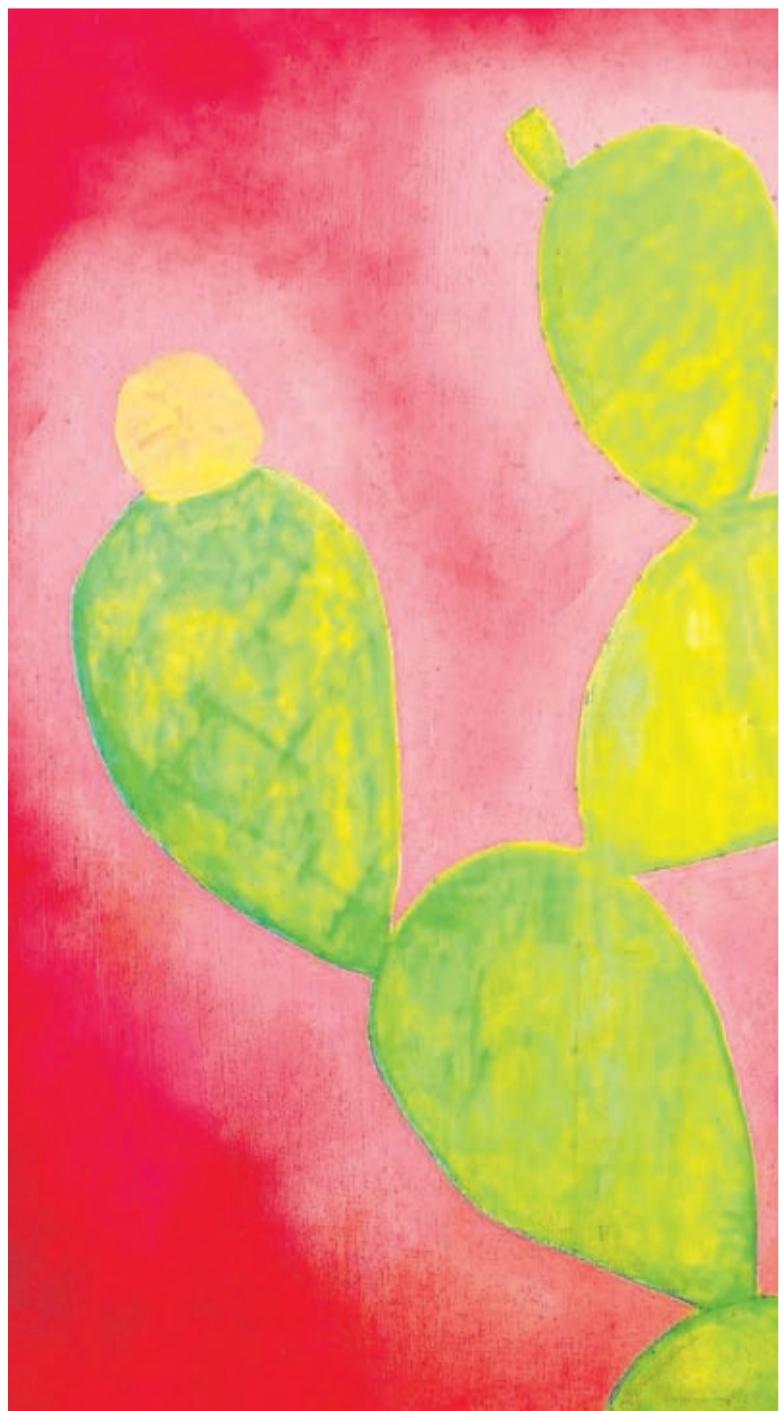
Etnia Nativa is close to high rise Hotels



## An ancient Amerindian pigment

**ORANJESTAD —** Worlds ancestral pigment farmers of the Americas cultivated a vegetarian insect that offers a high quality dye for animal, vegetal or synthetic fibers, fabrics and food preparation. This pigment was used in watercolor and oil paints and marketed a commodity. Carmine is a natural, animal coloring applied in the manufacturing of pharmaceutics and cosmetics such as rouge and lipsticks.

The insect that produces this amazing pigment is known as cochineal tick (*Coccus-cacti*) and they thrive on cactus plants, especially prickly pears or tuna's (*Opuntia spp.*). The insect when full grown, gives off a reddish or carmine dye when crushed. For this purposes it is set out on the Nopal cactus, Tuna Spaño and other *Opuntia* species (*Nopalea Cochenille* or *Dactylopius*). The tiny tick thrives by extracting juice of the cactus to mature. Then it is harvested and slightly sundried. One pound (1 lbs.) of color holds about 70.000 ticks. From this, crushed or leached in alcohol, a dye



is obtained called Cochineal Red.

By the year 1837 the island's Governor motivated entrepreneurship by assigning special areas of cultivation, such was Socotoro, Companashi, Mon Plaisir, Sividivi, Canashito, Quivarco. In Savanata and Sabana Grandi, Sta. Cruz. In Noord close to Shaba, Cunucu Abao, Pos Abao, Tanki Flip, Tanki Leendert and Ponton. Remarkable was the implementation of a few other local plants in order to improve production. These were the leaves of the Catash or Loki Loki tree (*Phyllanthus botryanthus*) that were rolled up into a cone shape which locals used to call "cartuchi" or "peperesh". The cocoon served as a parasol, umbrella and a wind shade at the same time protecting the tiny animal against the harsh elements. This was pinned in the cactus by using a thorn of a Cadushi (*Lemaireocereus griseus*).

At Sabana Grandi there used to be some six tomb ruins of a Dutch family with the name of Strakbein, who farmed the Cochineal bug in this area. It was an exhausting work. Soon after the aloe, another introduced plant, the cultivation of the bug began taking over in these experimental plantations. When in 1857 the Aniline dye was commercialized in Germany, the Cochineal commercial value plunged and by the year 1867 local culti-

vation disappeared completely. It's important to know that carmine farming seems to pre date the Inca's and Aztecs- also called cochineal (for the insect from which it is extracted), cochineal extract, crimson lake or carmine lake, natural red 4, C.I. 75470, or E120, is a pigment of a bright-red color obtained from the aluminum complex derived from carmine acid.

Carmine from Cochineal continues to be widely used in the industrial world because it is such a stable, safe and long-lasting additive whose color is little affected by heat or light. This carmine is also used to create the red Skittles candy however since 2009; Skittles have been produced without animal gelatin or shellac.□

To get to know a little more regarding Aruba's and its cultural origins we highly recommend you to book your participation in our cultural encounter session.

A mind opening revelation and entertaining island experience.

Mail us at [etnianativa03@gmail.com](mailto:etnianativa03@gmail.com), our facilities and activities take place close to high rise hotels.

**Episode XCII - 92**

## Liz Weston: Why you don't want to be an executor

By LIZ WESTON of NerdWallet

**let**

Being asked to be an executor is an honor you might want to pass up.

Settling an estate typically involves tracking down and appraising assets, paying bills and creditors, filing final tax returns and distributing whatever's left to the heirs. At best, the process is time-consuming. At worst, it takes hundreds of hours, exposes you to lawsuits and thrusts you into the middle of family fights.

Robert Braglia of New York, a certified financial planner, was executor of an estate where the woman disowned three of her four children and left most of her money to just one of her many grandchildren. That could have caused an uproar even if the family got along, which it didn't: Two of the woman's children were fighting over the woman's ashes before she actually died.

"Even without conflicts — which there always are — it is an enormous job," Braglia says.

Before you agree to take on this role, be clear on what's involved.

### YOU COULD BE DOING IT FOR MANY MONTHS

The time involved in settling



This undated file photo provided by NerdWallet shows Liz Weston, a columnist for personal finance website NerdWallet.com.

(NerdWallet via Associated Press)

an estate varies enormously. A small estate with few debts might be distributed within six to 12 months. It may take years to finalize a large estate with contentious heirs, lots of creditors or assets that are difficult to value, such as a business or rare collectibles.

A survey by EstateExec, an online tool for executors, found the typical estate took about 16 months to settle and required 570 hours of effort. The largest estates, worth \$5 million or more, took 42 months and 1,167 hours to complete.

That doesn't necessarily mean the executor has

to put in that many hours, says CFP Russ Weiss of Doylestown, Pennsylvania. An executor can use some of the estate's funds to hire an attorney and other help that could be more efficient than trying to figure everything out on their own.

"If you have other professionals involved — an attorney, a CPA, an investment person or wealth advisor — they're doing most of the heavy lifting," Weiss says. "Executors are like the quarterback in the administration of the estate."

Executors may also collect a fee, with the amount de-

pending on state law or what's specified in the estate documents.

### YOU MIGHT HAVE A TOUGH TIME FINDING ASSETS

Even with help, executors should expect to spend many hours finding documents, inventorying assets and debts, arranging appraisals, communicating with financial institutions and government agencies, managing property and keeping careful records. If the estate includes a home, the house may have to be emptied of possessions and readied for sale.

The less organized the estate, the more time it may take to track down assets. EstateExec CEO Dan Stickel said his father, who died at 69, rented multiple storage sheds without telling his children where they were. Finding the various backyard sheds was challenging enough, but then they had to sort through the dusty contents. Those included piles of newspapers, battered furniture and several bars of silver bullion hidden under a dirty tarp. Even then, they missed something.

The auction company Stickel hired to dispose of the rest of the sheds' contents found a box containing

\$30,000 in savings bonds. Fortunately, the company returned the bonds to the family.

### YOU COULD BE SUED

Executors have a fiduciary duty to the beneficiaries, which means the executor is required to put the beneficiaries' interests first. People are typically advised to choose executors who are responsible, honest, diligent and impartial.

"It's an honor. If somebody asks you, it's to say, 'I trust you, and I trust you implicitly that you will handle my affairs in a way that's fair,'" Weiss says.

But the fiduciary duty comes with potential legal and financial consequences. Executors can be held personally responsible for mistakes and other problems. For example, one child may remove items from a parent's home that are bequeathed to another child. The heir whose items were taken could sue the executor for failing to secure the home.

Executors also may have to make judgment calls, such as whether to spend the estate's money to fix up a house for sale and if so, how much. Unhappy heirs can sue over those decisions, as well. □

## Luxury car brand Jaguar to go all-electric by 2025

By PAN PYLAS  
Associated Press

**LONDON (AP) —** Struggling luxury car brand Jaguar will be fully electric by 2025, the British company said Monday as it outlined a plan to phase out inter-

nal combustion engines. Jaguar Land Rover, which is owned by Indian conglomerate Tata Motors, hopes the move will help turn around the fortunes of the 86-year-old Jaguar brand, which for many

epitomizes class but has struggled in recent years. The switch to an electric future will involve moving car production from JLR's Castle Bromwich factory east of the central England city of Birmingham to nearby Solihull. Chief Executive Thierry Bollore said the firm is "exploring opportunities to repurpose" the Castle Bromwich plant, leading to speculation it could be used for battery production. Jaguar Land Rover also said that the far more profitable Land Rover brand will produce its first all-electric model in 2024 as it, too, phases out internal combustion engines.

"We have all the ingredients at our disposal to rei-

magine the business and the experiences our customers seek, to reimagine to benchmark of luxury," Bollore said. The move was welcomed by British Transport Secretary Grant Shapps as "a huge step for British car manufacturing." The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, the British car industry's lobby group, said the announcement represents "an injection of confidence" into the sector, which has suffered over the past year during the coronavirus pandemic.

"Its roadmap to a future that is built around sustainability, with electrified and hydrogen models as well as investment in connected

and digital technologies, aligns with government ambition and increasing consumer expectations," said the SMMT's chief executive, Mike Hawes.

However, he said the U.K. will need to improve its competitiveness in light of the "fierce" global competition going on in the shift to electric cars, not least from the likes of Tesla.

"Government must ensure advanced manufacturing has its full support, with a policy framework and plan for growth that reduces costs, accelerates domestic battery production and electrified supply chains, and incentivises R&D and skills development," he said. □



In this file photo dated Sunday, Sept. 6, 2020, the Jaguar car company logo shines off the deck of an I-Pace electric vehicle at a Jaguar dealership, in Littleton, USA.

Associated Press

## Late ice cramps anglers' appetite, research of crucial fish

By PATRICK WHITTLE

Associated Press

BOWDOINHAM, Maine

(AP) — A lack of ice in cold weather states this year has made it difficult for scientists to study the population of an ecologically important fish.

Rainbow smelts, which are small fish that are very popular with ice anglers, have been a focus of conservationists for many years. The federal government listed the fish as a species of special concern more than 15 years ago due to declines in its population.

In Maine, a late arriving winter has made it difficult to collect data about the health of the smelt population. The weather had been warmer than typical until early February, so there hadn't been enough ice to attempt to catch them.

Other states where ice fishing is a winter tradition, such as New Hampshire and Michigan, have had similar problems. The ice is hardening in many states now, but the season is likely to be shorter than typical.



In this Friday, Feb. 2, 2018 file photo, an ice fisherman shows smelt caught at Jim Worthing's Smelt Camps on the Kennebec River in Randolph, Maine.

Associated Press

"With the season starting so late we have not had many opportunities to sample the commercial and recreational catches this year," said Michael Brown, a fisheries scientist with the state of Maine.

The smelts are important

because they are a key piece of the food chain in coastal areas, lakes and rivers.

The cause of their population decline is the subject of ongoing scientific study. Loss of habitat and climate change have the biggest

impact on smelt populations, Brown said. Over-fishing has also played a role, the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and other authorities have reported.

Recreational anglers who seek smelts through the

ice, such as at smelt camps that line Maine waterways in the winter, are fond of frying and eating them with the head still on. Others use the fish as bait.

The lack of ice has also been a blow for businesses that depend on winter fishing. On Lake Erie, ice fishing charter boat captain Tony Muscioni said thick ice finally arrived about three weeks ago, which was about four weeks later than normal. Muscioni, who owns Air1Airboats, which leads charters from Port Clinton, Ohio, said it was a continuation of a troubling trend from recent years.

"This year came in late — we didn't think we were going to get it, but we got it. You've just got to watch where you're going now."

Steve Leighton, owner of Leighton Smelt Camps in Bowdoinham, Maine, said he's looking at a difficult year financially as well.

"Just going to try to pay for expenses right now, and I don't know if I can even do that," Leighton said. "If I get to the 27th, I'll be happy." □

## Fauci wins \$1 million Israeli prize for 'defending science'

By LAURIE KELLMAN

Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Dr. Anthony Fauci has won the \$1 million Dan David Prize for "defending science" and advocating for vac-

cines now being administered worldwide to fight the coronavirus pandemic. The Israel-based Dan David Foundation on Monday named President Joe Biden's chief medical ad-

viseur as the winner of one of three prizes. It said he had earned the recognition over a lifetime of leadership on HIV research and AIDS relief, as well as his advocacy for the vaccines against COVID-19.

In its statement, the private foundation did not mention former President Donald Trump, who undermined Fauci's follow-the-science approach to the pandemic.

But it credited Fauci with "courageously defending science in the face of uninformed opposition during the challenging COVID crisis."

"As the COVID-19 pandemic unraveled, (Fauci) leveraged his considerable communication skills to address people gripped by fear and anxiety and worked relentlessly to inform individuals in the United States and elsewhere about the public health

measures essential for containing the pandemic's spread," the foundation's awards committee said, praising Fauci for "speaking truth to power in a highly charged political environment."

Fauci, 80, has served seven presidents and has been the director of the National Institute of Allergy and

Infectious Diseases since 1984. In recent interviews, Fauci has acknowledged that it was difficult at times to work for Trump, who repeatedly played down the severity of the pandemic, dismissed the need for mask-wearing and often touted unproven scientific remedies, including injecting disinfectant. □

### Conceptis Sudoku

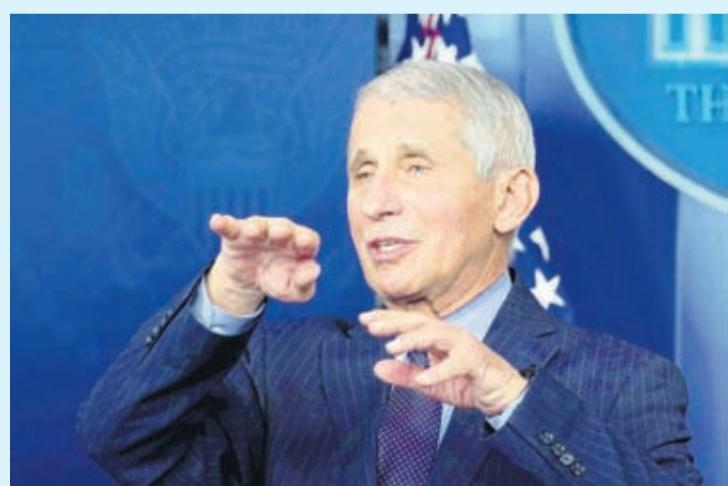
By Dave Green

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Difficulty Level ★★

2/16



In this Jan. 21, 2021 file photo, Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, speaks with reporters at the White House, in Washington.

Associated Press

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## A star-making lead performance in 'The Mauritanian'

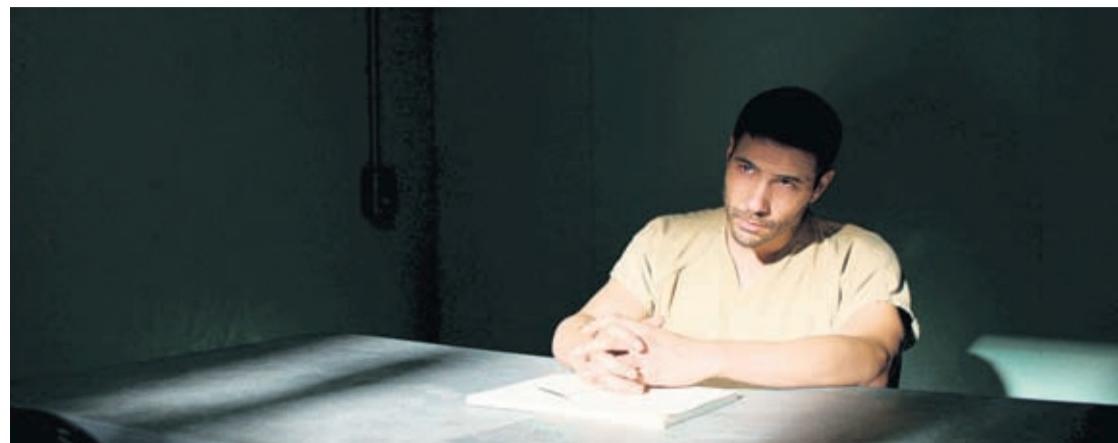
By JOCELYN NOVECK

AP National Writer

It's often the case that movies based on true stories offer a glimpse of the real-life characters at the end. In "The Mauritanian," the story of former Guantanamo Bay detainee Mohamedou Ould Slahi's 14 years behind bars, that real-life footage is the most engaging part of the film. That's not entirely the fault of the filmmakers, who do an earnest and thoughtful if less than totally absorbing job of telling Slahi's story based on the best-selling memoir he wrote in prison, "Guantanamo Diary."

It's just that nothing can beat this intimate view of the real man, smiling and singing joyfully to Bob Dylan, no less. One wonders how he even managed to stay sane, let alone joyful, after 14 years at Guantanamo without being formally charged or tried. And in conditions that included a brutal stretch of torture: severe cold, sexual humiliation, sleep deprivation, a mock drowning, waterboarding, and threats to imprison his own mother at Guantanamo.

Luckily, "The Mauritanian," directed by Kevin Macdonald, gets one thing very right: Tahar Rahim's masterful central performance. The French actor achieves



This image released by STXfilms shows Tahar Rahim in "The Mauritanian." Rahim was nominated for a Golden Globe for best actor in a motion picture drama.

Associated Press

something his big-name costars — Jodie Foster, Benedict Cumberbatch and Shailene Woodley — do not, presenting a multi-layered, subtly shaded and deeply moving portrayal that proves hard to forget. Rahim deserves the awards buzz he's getting; he also deserves more big roles, and soon. Macdonald is known for documentaries (the Oscar-winning "One Day in September") as well as features ("The Last King of Scotland"), and "The Mauritanian" has a quasi-documentary feel at times. Partly that's because there's a lot of dry information to get across here, namely the ins and outs of Slahi's legal case. The film tries to achieve this by juxtaposing the stories of defense lawyer Nancy Hollander (Foster), who

works to gain Slahi's release based on lack of evidence, and U.S. military prosecutor Stuart Couch (Cumberbatch.) Both Foster, in her brittle, crusty portrayal of Hollander, and Cumberbatch, sporting a southern drawl as a devoted military man with a conscience, are welcome presences in any movie. But the script here really doesn't give them a lot to work with — we learn almost nothing about them as people outside the case. With actors of this caliber, that's a shame.

Rahim, though, has plenty of room to shine. The actor finds a way to infuse almost every scene with humor and humanity. We first meet Slahi at a wedding celebration in Mauritania, two months after 9/11. The police show up to

question him about ties to al-Qaida. "The Americans are going crazy," they say. He assures his mother he'll be back soon — and asks her to save him some food. It's clear she fears she may never see him again (in fact, she didn't.)

Four years later in Albuquerque, lawyer Hollander is approached to use her security clearance to help find Slahi, on behalf of his desperate family. She has no idea of his innocence or guilt, but asks: "Since when did we start locking people up without a trial in this country?" She enlists a junior colleague, Teri Duncan, to help (Woodley, underused.) Meanwhile we meet Couch (Cumberbatch, also a producer here), who's tapped by superiors to lead the prosecution. They know he

has skin in the game: his good buddy was a pilot on one of the planes that hit the World Trade Center. He asks: "When do we start?" It's made clear that the goal is the death penalty. The film tracks these two as they pursue their cases, each stymied by government restrictions on information. Hollander receives cartons of fully redacted documents; Couch seeks crucial details about interrogations. For each, the ultimate discovery of the torture Slahi went through will change the dynamics of the case.

But the most accessible scenes feature Slahi himself, whether they involve the dreaded interrogations or the prisoner's basic efforts at making a friend at Guantanamo, a French detainee he speaks to through a green mesh fence, and who dubs him "The Mauritanian."

The film has the rhythm of a legal thriller heading toward a dramatic courtroom trial. The true climax is hardly that climactic: Slahi testifies by video at his habeas corpus hearing. He learns by mail that he's won. He whoops with joy. He's going home.

And then, the closing credits tell us, he remains imprisoned at Guantanamo for seven more years. □

## Chip and Joanna Gaines' Magnolia Network debuts January 2022



This image released by Magnolia Network shows Chip and Joanna Gaines from the sixth season of "Fixer Upper."

Associated Press

By LYNN ELBER  
AP Television Writer  
LOS ANGELES (AP) — "Fixer

Upper" stars Chip and Joanna Gaines' Magnolia enterprise is finally coming

to full bloom, with an app launch in July and the debut of a television channel in January 2022.

"We did it!" an exuberant Chip Gaines said in a virtual Q&A panel tied to Thursday's announcement, which gave a start date to the TV venture first announced in 2018 and expected by this year.

Magnolia Network, which replaces the DIY Network, will feature original shows, new seasons of some DIY series and all past episodes of the home renovation show "Fixer Upper," which first aired on HGTV in 2013 and proved the start of a brand that's undergoing major expansion.

The app's July 15 arrival is timed to an expanded slate of original shows available on the app and on streaming service discovery+, the current home of a Magnolia Network preview.

The sneak peek offers shows on food, gardening, design and the arts, including season one of the new series "Fixer Upper: Welcome Home" and "Magnolia Table with Joanna Gaines." The couple, from Waco, Texas, were asked if they would have preferred to have all content ready and launching on the network, as opposed to the gradual introduction starting online.

The original expectation

was "hey, we're going to launch and boom, here we are," but their partnership with Discovery Inc. and the early 2020 launch of discovery+ offered an alternative, Joanna Gaines said. The couple got excited about the opportunity to display what has been in the works for the last year or two, she said. □

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4	5	9	2	7	6	8	1	3

Difficulty Level ★★ 2/16

# McDowell beats 100-1 odds for upset Daytona 500 victory

By JENNA FRYER

AP Auto Racing Writer

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. (AP)

— Michael McDowell was glued to Brad Keselowski's bumper, watching and waiting for his chance to win the Daytona 500.

Joey Logano was the leader, the laps were winding down and yet no one had the nerve to pull out of traffic. McDowell was certain Keselowski would go for it eventually, and when he did, McDowell would play his hand.

On the final lap, Keselowski attempted to dart around Logano, but Logano threw a block on his teammate that crashed them both. McDowell stayed right where he was, flat in the gas, and drove through a crash scene for a stunning upset.

"I knew he would go for a race-winning move and my plan was to let him make that move," McDowell said. "I knew I didn't want to make my move too early, so I was committed to the (Keselowski) bumper and when he made the move, the hole opened up."

A 100-1 underdog when the race began Sunday afternoon, McDowell won for the first time in 358 Cup starts when the checkered flag finally flew about 15 minutes after midnight. The race was stopped by rain for almost six hours and ended nine hours after the green flag waved at Daytona International Speedway.

"There's been lots of years where I was wondering what the heck am I doing and why am I doing it?" McDowell said. "I always knew if I just kept grinding that one day everything will line up and go right."

NASCAR's season opener was stacked with storylines. Denny Hamlin was trying for a record third-consecutive Daytona 500 victory, and the team he started with Michael Jordan was debuting with driver Bubba Wallace.

Kyle Larson was back after nearly a year in exile for using a racial slur, and reigning Cup champion Chase

Elliott was going for his first Daytona 500 win.

And all the way at the back of the field, 1990 Daytona 500 winner Derrike Cope made what he said would be his final NASCAR start. At 62 he was the oldest driver in the field, and his upset victory 31 years ago was considered the biggest in race history.

McDowell didn't take that title from Cope, partly because McDowell is a strong superspeedway racer capable of mixing it up with the usual suspects. If he could ever find himself in the right place at the right time, McDowell figured he could steal a win. "It's been a tough road for me. I've had to spend a lot of years grinding it out," McDowell said. His career has been

stabilized by four seasons driving for Front Row Motorsports, a tiny team in the Ford family that can hold its own at Daytona.

McDowell was in the mix even before the two Penske cars derailed the finish. His Ford was strong enough to push Keselowski, and McDowell figured with the checkered flag in sight, he'd try to pass Keselowski as they exited the final turn. Logano's block of Keselowski—it seemed late, Keselowski had already started to pull alongside his teammate — triggered a fiery multi-car pileup that was in McDowell's rearview mirror. Keselowski subtly blamed Logano for the messy finish. "I wanted to make the pass to win the Daytona 500 and it ended up really bad,"



Michael McDowell celebrates after winning the NASCAR Daytona 500 auto race at Daytona International Speedway, Monday, Feb. 15, 2021, in Daytona Beach, Fla.

Associated Press

Keselowski said. "I don't feel like I made a mistake, but I can't drive everybody else's car. So frustrating." Logano had no explanation for the ending. "Pandemonium, I guess.

Chaos struck," said Logano, who then praised McDowell. "It's a real bummer that none of the Penske cars won, but at least a Ford won and I'm really happy for McDowell. □

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## Daughter of Bills, Sabres owners into all-U.S. QF in Australia

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)

— After Jessica Pegula earned her first trip to a Grand Slam quarterfinal, the daughter of the owners of Buffalo's NFL and NHL franchises scribbled on the screen of an Australian Open courtside TV camera: "Hi Mom, Hi Dad. See u next rnd Jen B."

In addition to a shoutout to her parents, that was a message for Jennifer Brady, a good pal of Pegula's whose fourth-round match was up next in Rod Laver Arena on Monday.

And after Brady won, too, setting up an all-American matchup against Pegula with a berth in the final four at stake, she used a blue marker to respond in kind, writing: "Bring it Jess!"

"It's an opportunity for both of us," Pegula said, recalling that she and Brady became close after playing doubles together for the United States in the team competition now known as the Billie Jean King Cup. "I'm just happy I'm here; she's been playing some good tennis, solidifying herself as a top player."

The 61st-ranked Pegula beat No. 5 seed Elina Svitolina of Ukraine 6-4, 3-6, 6-3, before the 22nd-seeded Brady, a Pennsylvanian who played college tennis at UCLA, had a 6-1, 7-5 victory over No. 28 Donna Vekic of Croatia.

Brady was one of the 72 players who had to go through a hard lockdown — two weeks stuck in a hotel room, not allowed to leave for any reason — after flying to Australia in January because someone on their flight tested positive for COVID-19 upon arrival. "A lot of people were complaining, and I told myself I wasn't going to complain,"



United States' Jessica Pegula celebrates after defeating Ukraine's Elina Svitolina in their fourth round match at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia, Monday, Feb. 15, 2021.

Associated Press

Brady said. "I mean, there's way worse things going on in the world than me being stuck in a hotel room for 14 days."

Brady and Pegula gave the U.S. three women's quarterfinalists at Melbourne Park, joining 23-time Grand Slam champion Serena Williams, who advanced a day earlier.

Top-ranked Ash Barty ensured a fourth American didn't make it to the last eight, beating unseeded Shelby Rogers 6-3, 6-4 to set up a quarterfinal against No. 25 Karolina Muchova.

"I mean, it's pretty awesome to see. I hope we can all push through," Pegula said. "The last, I don't know, year or so, we've really all pushed each other. Maybe we haven't said it to each other, but I think we all can feel it." She is on quite a breakthrough run.

Pegula has won four matches at Melbourne Park over the past week — including victories over two-time Australian Open champion Victoria Azarenka and 2011 U.S. Open champion Sam Stosur — after entering the hard-court tournament with a total of

three wins at majors for her career.

Also significant for Pegula, who works with Venus Williams' former coach, David Witt: She came into the day with an 0-6 record against top 10 women.

Witt said Pegula's rising confidence is a big part of her progress. She found a sort of kinship with her family's football team, the Bills, who made the playoffs three of the past four seasons behind quarterback

Josh Allen after going nearly two decades without a trip to the postseason.

"Even last year, when he wasn't playing that well, I was like, 'I like this kid.' I loved his competitive spirit. He was a gamer. He just wanted to win. That's something you love to see," she said about Allen. "It's definitely something I think I tried to take into

my game a little bit, even watching the team getting that grit, that competitive attitude, having that mindset — in tennis, it's like 90%, sometimes, of the matches. I think it's been really cool to watch them and kind of channel that energy into how I've been doing."

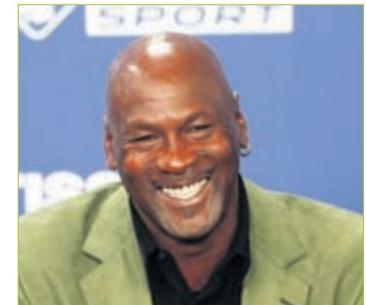
Brady's progress is far less surprising, given that she made it to the semifinals at the U.S. Open in September before losing to eventual champion Naomi Osaka. Vekic's right knee was heavily taped by a trainer early in the second set, which eventually got to 5-all. But Brady broke at love there when Vekic double-faulted, then held for the victory.

There will be a one-nation men's quarterfinal, too, between Russians Daniil Medvedev and Andrey Rublev. Medvedev, the 2019 U.S. Open runner-up, eliminated 192nd-ranked American Mackenzie McDonald 6-4, 6-2, 6-3 in 1 1/2 hours, while Rublev moved on when No. 22 Casper Ruud stopped because of an injury after dropping the first two sets.

A third Russian man, 114th-ranked qualifier Aslan Karatsev, already had advanced, giving the country a trio of quarterfinalists at a major tournament for the only time in the professional era.

Also on that half of the draw, Rafael Nadal moved closer to a men's-record 21st Grand Slam trophy by overwhelming No. 16 Fabio Fognini 6-3, 6-4, 6-2. Nadal's next opponent will be No. 5 Stefanos Tsitsipas, whose fourth-round match was canceled when No. 9 Matteo Berrettini withdrew because of an abdominal injury.

With the sky blue and temperatures in the low 70s Fahrenheit (low 20s Celsius), and no fans in the stands for the third day in a row because of a local COVID-19 lockdown, Pegula dictated groundstroke exchanges from right along the baseline. □



Basketball legend Michael Jordan speaks during a press conference ahead of an NBA basketball game between the Charlotte Hornets and Milwaukee Bucks in Paris, in this Friday, Jan. 24, 2020, file photo.

Associated Press

## Michael Jordan gives \$10M for North Carolina health clinics

WILMINGTON, N.C. (AP) — Basketball legend Michael Jordan is donating \$10 million to launch two medical clinics in underserved communities near his hometown in North Carolina, a regional health care system announced Monday.

The Novant Health clinics are set to open in early 2022 in New Hanover County along North Carolina's southeastern coast, according to a statement from the system. The gift marks one of the largest ever from the Basketball Hall of Fame athlete, news outlets reported.

Jordan previously gave \$7 million to open Michael Jordan Family Clinics in Charlotte in 2019 and 2020. Those clinics have since seen more than 4,500 patients and have administered nearly 1,000 COVID-19 vaccines, Novant Health said. □